



Buzzwords ...

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..... the newsletter for National Beekeepers' Association members

What's in this issue ...

Buzzwords No. 4, December 1988

- * *Lobbying your MP*
- * *Bee semen imported*
- * *First details - Conference '89*



"It's funny how people die in alphabetical order"

Why is there more AFB ?

THE FUNDING ISSUE - LOBBYING YOUR MP

The floodgates have really opened, and beekeepers are deluging their MPs, MAF, the NBA and anyone else within range with letters about paying for disease inspection.

We expected this from the open letter, which was recently sent to all registered beekeepers and which outlined our intentions for ensuring a continued apiary registration and disease control system.

The usual pattern for letters to cabinet ministers or MPs is that they go to MAF or to the NBA for comment before the MP replies. Recently quite a number have come from the big beehive with a disturbing amount of inaccuracies or

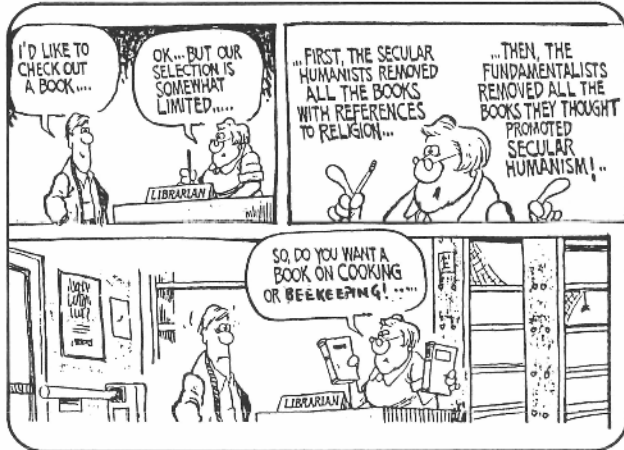
straightforward untruths; usually repeating something told to them by an individual beekeeper or a group of beekeepers.

This funding issue is complicated and emotive enough without misinformation fuelling the fire. If you or your branch or club feel the need to lobby your MP then please be sure of your facts and figures before making an approach. Any written information, especially from branches, should be copied to the NBA secretary as a courtesy.

Misinformation can be worse than no information at all, particularly when in the wrong hands. The correct message first time round is most important in order to avoid unnecessary confusion in the future. This is most critical when dealing with MPs, as these are the same people we will most likely be dealing with over forthcoming legislative changes.

So by all means exercise your right to approach your parliamentary representatives, but do your industry a favour and first make sure your facts are right. This will help those dealing with the industry to have a proper understanding, and will help your executive to try and solve this most difficult problem on your behalf.

Allen McCaw
NBA President



BEE SEMEN ARRIVES

The first legal importation of honey bees for over 30 years arrived in New Zealand recently - as semen from Western Australia. WA is free of EFB, harmful mites and Africanization, and their bee breeding programme claims a 10% increase in productivity per generation. The importer wants to get some of those qualities into our stock, as well as possibly introducing new sex alleles to overcome our alleged inbreeding problem.

The 100 microlitres of semen was pooled from 12 families of Italian bees. It was imported under MAF permit, and 10% was tested on arrival by Denis Anderson for bee diseases. The insemination and quarantine is being carried out under MAF supervision.

The inseminated queens are being held in an isolated apiary in hives that are strapped up and screened with excluders. The queens will be released after three months, after inspection and disease testing of the progeny.

1989 CONFERENCE

The Otago branch have selected a venue for next year's NBA conference, which they are hosting in Dunedin.

The conference will be at the Pacific Park Hotel, and a very good room rate of \$66 has been negotiated. A number of motel units will also be available (price to be announced later), and for those seeking greater comfort (or a diversion from the mundane business of conference), the hotel offers three waterbed suites as well.

So start planning now for July next year, and head south to experience some of the famous southern hospitality. Watch this space for further details.

AFB - WHY IS THERE MORE OF IT?

Beekeepers in pollination areas are talking a lot about AFB at the moment. Most are saying that:

- * AFB incidence is increasing.
- * It's being found more in hives that have been used for pollination.
- * The disease is showing up quite often as a few infected cells, rather than as whole frames that are rotten.

Let's look at those three things in turn. First - is AFB increasing? The statistics produced by MAF show that the national AFB incidence has risen from about 0.6% of hives to around double that over the last 5 years, and the number of infected apiaries has increased from 3.5% to 5%.

I would expect AFB to be more common in pollination hives because:

- * There's wholesale swapping of frames between hives during spring.
- * The hives are in more sites during a season.
- * There's often a lot of drift between hives in orchards.
- * Robbing may be a factor.

The first of these is, I think, the main cause of disease problems in pollination hives. A totally different management system for these hives demands a quantum improvement in your disease prevention techniques. By disease prevention I mean stopping the chances it has to spread, rather than eradicating AFB after it's found (that's disease control).

You might ask "How can I afford the time to disease check a hive every time I equalize brood or bees?". I would ask how you can afford not to.

Now to the third point, about AFB showing up more as just one or two cells, rather than whole frames. No, I don't think it's a new strain of AFB. I think that you're seeing the disease like this because you're catching it earlier, because you're down in the brood nest so often. So that's a feather in the cap of some beekeepers.



DOWN SOUTH

Don't forget that if you want to give your thermal underwear a test run, the Southland field day could be for you. Mark the date - 4 February 1989, Lee's Apiaries, Balfour.

No, seriously folks, February is summer down there too! Just your long johns will do.

AFRICAN BEES ARE FOR REAL

I've noticed a sudden change in the US beekeeping journals when discussing the African honey bee (AHB). Instead of talking about stopping the bee in its tracks before it reaches the States, they're now talking about how to manage the beast once it arrives.

You might remember the BRZ or bee regulated zone - an area across the narrowest part of Mexico that would be monitored for the presence of AHB. Hives would be checked, feral colonies and swarms destroyed, and so on.

Well, by the time people had talked about the zone for long enough AHB was reported from well past that area.

Now US beekeepers are being told how to stop worrying and learn to live with the AHB. *Speedy Bee* recommends several points:

- * Regular requeening with certified stock.
- * Destruction of all swarms (because of *Varroa* and tracheal mite as well).
- * Choose apiary sites well away from the public, and spread hives out individually. (You can imagine how well this would work for pollination sites).
- * All hives must be covered with nets during shifting. Loads of supers must be covered too, as in Africanized areas swarms will invade supers when trucks stop.

SUGAR DUTY

Anti-dumping duty has been imposed by the Customs Department on sugar from West Germany, Thailand and Malaysia. The duty will set the price of Thai and Malaysian sugar at \$600 per tonne f.o.b., and of West German product at \$550.

This move follows a long Customs Department investigation into sugar imports following a complaint in April from the New Zealand Sugar Co.

Sugar import licences became available on demand in September 1986, and free of licence in September 1988. Direct imports (other than through the refinery) rose from less than 2000 tonnes in the year to March 1987, to over 22000 tonnes in the following year - about 15% of the domestic market. In only six months of the next year (April-September 1988), imports ran to 13000 tonnes.

BEEKEEPING RESEARCH

Over the Tasman the Australian Honey Research Council has announced its 1988-89 programme. A budget of \$A217,000 will be spent, with over 50% going on bee nutrition, disease and bee breeding. Administration and overheads take 15% of the total.

POLLINATION PRICE CUTS

Price cutting has again become a feature of kiwifruit pollination in the Bay of Plenty. A number of operators are offering hives at \$70 (or have I even heard \$60?). Most growers realise that they should get these hives audited. Many aren't concerned about whether the \$60 merchants will be in business next year - they're not even sure if they will be themselves.

Some beekeepers have lowered their prices to try and keep market share, but others are concerned about the long term effect of doing so. One beekeeper has explained why he isn't prepared to drop his price from the Norm: "If I'm going to go broke I'd rather lie on the beach and do it in comfort. I'm not interested in humping heavy hives as a way of becoming bankrupt".

AND YET MORE ON BEE STAMPS

If you can't have a bee stamp, then how about a bee coin? Tonga has a hive and bees on their 20c coin, and I know that Malta and Italy have had bee coins in the past. Might be appropriate for the new \$1 and \$2 coins, as an indication of how people have been "stung" by rising prices.



MYTHS ABOUT AMERICAN FOULBROOD

Some old spouse's tales about AFB that should have been put on the bonfire long ago:

- * If there's only two or three cells affected in a hive, you only need to burn that comb.
- * Dry frames can't spread AFB (once the honey is gone).
- * It's safe to rob out wets in the open.
- * Most AFB comes from wild hives.
- * A lot of BL spores get spread on MAF inspectors' gloves.
- * There's BL spores in most hives, and the colonies only go down with the disease when they're stressed.

EXPORT SPECIFICATIONS

Currently our auditing procedures for bee product exports are under review, which could result in new specifications for exporters. The specification is likely to be modelled on one developed by the Ministry of Works for their pipeline contractors, which is detailed here.

All pipe is to be made up of a long hole surrounded by metal or plastic.

Pipe is to be hollow throughout its entire length - contractors are not to use holes of different length than the surrounding pipe.

Contractors are to ensure that the ID (inside diameter) does not at any point exceed the OD (outside diameter) - otherwise the hole will be at the outside of the pipe and the gas will escape.

Pipe is to be supplied with nothing in the hole, so that water, steam, gas or other material can be inserted later.

Pipe is to be supplied on site without rust, as this can more readily be applied at the job site.

Pipe over 150 metres in length is to be marked "LONG PIPE" at each end so the contractor will know it is long pipe.

Pipe over 3 km in length is also to be marked "LONG PIPE" at the middle, ie 1.5 km from either end, so the contractor does not have to walk its entire length to determine whether it is long or short pipe.

Pipe over 150cm in diameter is to be marked "LARGE PIPE" so the contractor will not mistake it for small pipe.

Flanges must be used on pipe where specified. Flanges are to be situated at the ends of the pipe only and are to contain holes for connecting bolts, quite separate from the big hole in the middle.

When turning corners, 90°, 45° or 30° elbows are to be used. Right hand or left hand elbows are to be placed on the ends of the pipe only and are to point the right way otherwise the pipeline will go in the wrong direction.

Level pipe, uphill pipe or downhill pipe must be used according to ground contours. If downhill pipe is used for going uphill the gas will flow the wrong way.

Screw couplings (where used) are to be right hand or left hand thread only. No other thread type is to be used. Screw couplings are to be fitted at pipe ends only. Left hand and right hand threads should not be mixed, otherwise as the coupling is being screwed on one pipe it will unscrew from the other, or cross threading may occur.

Where pipe is laid in a trench the contractor must ensure that the bottom of the trench is below the surface of the ground. Forming the bottom of the trench above ground level may create problems in backfilling and compaction.

MAKING UP HIVE PARTS

Need some frames or boxes assembled? Sheltered workshops, IHC and Disabled Citizens groups in many areas assemble bee gear as part of their work programmes. Using these groups can be very cost-effective for you, as well as providing worthwhile work for them. Contact your nearest such organization to find out if they do, or would like to, assemble hive equipment under contract.

As well as assembly, some groups such as Hamilton's Sheltered Workshops actually make bee gear as well.

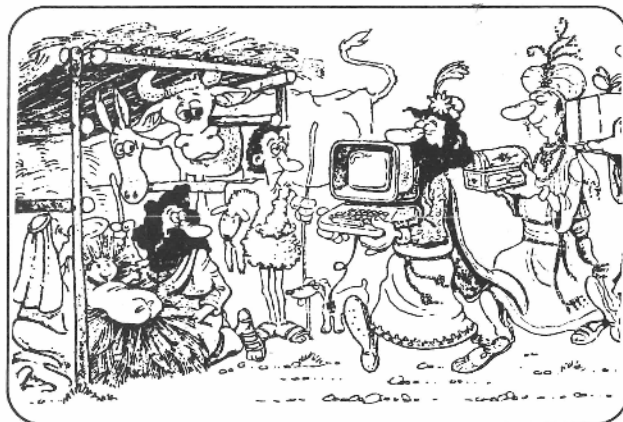
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WHERE WOULD YOU BE WITHOUT BRUT?

Many beekeepers have introduced queens with the aid of strongly-perfumed substances such as talcum powder or eucalyptus oil. At a recent field day Bruce White, New South Wales's chief apicultural adviser, was going to demonstrate the system but hadn't brought the talc. What better substitute than Brut spray-on deodorant?

The Brut was puffed at the entrance and over the top bars, and from a distance onto the queen. Things looked OK as there weren't any dead bees at the entrance, but a check a few days later showed the hive had no queen cells, eggs or queens.

The moral of the story? Perhaps it's to stick with conventional methods. Or is it to use a "ladies' deodorant" when introducing queens?



BUZZWORDS IS ...

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